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ABSTRACT

This curriculum outline introduces the components of a world mythology and contemporary literature course which incorporates an Asian module focusing on Chinese mythology. Following a course description that discusses the rationale for incorporating Chinese mythology, the goals and student objectives of the course are introduced, emphasizing the use of Chinese myths in conjunction with myths of other cultures in analyzing literary work. Next, the outline and assignments for the course are presented, focusing on the transition from general background material on mythology to creation myths from a wide range of cultures, fertility myths which explore the relationships between people and their gods, hero myths as representatives of the culture's values, and the influence of ancient myths through their themes, characters, and motifs. The criteria for evaluating students is then presented, followed by a list of general discussion questions applicable to most cultures' myths. The remainder of the course outline describes the activities and strategies for presenting the material, and lists the audiovisual aids used in the course. Course material and assignments are appended. Contains an annotated bibliography. (TGI)

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ED 407 964

ENGLISH

"CHINESE MYTHOLOGY: BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES"

Use In: World Mythology and Contemporary Literature

BY

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JC 970 291

CURRICULUM MODULE FOR ASIAN STUDIES
CHINESE MYTHOLOGY: BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES
for use in (ENG: 228) WORLD MYTHOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY
LITERATURE

RATIONALE

World Mythology and Contemporary Literature has two major components. During the first half of the semester, students read and study the ancient myths of cultures from around the world. This study gives the students a solid background in universal themes, archetypal characters, and motifs while they note the particular "signature," or influence, each culture imposes upon these universal elements. The second half of the course shifts focus to literature and archetypal criticism. Students study a work to see how the universal themes, archetypal characters, and motifs have been shaped by both the culture in which the work has been written and the individual artist. The Asian Studies module developed for this course will enhance both components while providing the students a fuller understanding of Asian culture.

The primary focus of the module is China. During the first half of the course, students will study Chinese creation, fertility and hero myths. They will see these myths in the context of other cultures' myths--such Greek, Egyptian, Norse, African, and Aztec--noting both universal and distinctive features. As the course makes the transition from ancient myths to literature, students will read a condensed edition of Wu Ch'eng-en's *Monkey*. This novel is particularly suited as a transition piece because its use of mythic themes, characters and motifs is apparent and its cultural context--the allusions to Chinese society, politics, folk tales, religion and philosophy--is strong. Although the novel is complex, its allegorical nature makes it very accessible, even to students with minimal backgrounds in literary analysis. The story is also an engaging one with cosmic battles, monsters, magic and humor.

INCORPORATING THE MODULE

I will be using this module in ENG: 228 World Mythology and Contemporary Literature. In my own world mythology course, I organize the myths thematically, rather than by culture. So, for example, I might spend one class period on Greek creation myths, followed by a class period on Chinese creation myths, and so on. I then cover fertility myths and, finally, hero myths. However, if I were to organize my course by culture, I would take one week to two weeks to discuss representative Chinese creation, fertility and hero myths. I generally spend another one to two weeks on Wu Ch'eng-en's *Monkey*. Much of the first week is spent discussing background influences and allusions in the novel. The second week is spent analyzing the novel itself and preparing the students for the follow-up essay over the novel.

I. GOALS

- *To familiarize students with a variety of Chinese myths.
- *To present Chinese myths in conjunction with the myths of other cultures, so students can identify common characters, themes, and motifs.
- *To provide students with background information on Chinese culture, so they may see how this culture gives the myths a particular "signature," even as they depict universal ideas.
- *To provide the students with some information about Wu Ch'eng-en and other Chinese literature's influence on *Monkey*.
- *To allow students to apply archetypal criticism in analyzing a literary work.

II. STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- *Students will be able to identify principal characters, themes and motifs found in popular Chinese myths.
- *Students will be able to compare Chinese myths to other major world myths, noting the interplay between cultural influences and timeless archetypal themes, characters and motifs.
- *Students will analyze a literary work for the purpose of identifying specific cultural references and influences that have shaped the presentation of universal themes.
- *Students will be able to discuss how a specific author's concerns and influences may shape the presentation and expression of universal themes.
- *Students will write a paper that applies archetypal criticism to achieve new insights and interpretations of a literary work

III. OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. The course begins with some general background material on mythology: definitions, functions, theories of transmission, primitive roots. Background relative to

the Asian Studies module will focus on the separation of Eastern and Western mythologies in their depictions of human nature, people's relationship with the divine, and the ultimate goal of the human spirit.

Assignment: *Students will read two chapters from Joseph Campbell's book *Myths to Live by*: "The Separation of East and West" and "The Confrontation of East and West in Religion." As they read, students will complete a series of guided reading questions.

B. Students will read creation myths from a wide range of cultures, including Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Norse, Celtic, Japanese, Chinese, African, Aztec, Mayan and Native American. Specific Chinese myths will include the myths of Pangu and the culture bringers Fu Xi and Nu Wa.

Assignment: *Working in groups, students will complete a chart comparing elements of creation myths from various cultures.
(see Appendix B)

C. Students will then read a variety of fertility myths, which explore the relationships between people and their god(s). These myths often deal with major disasters such as floods or the loss of the sun or too much sun. Some fertility myths show the benevolent nature of a culture's god(s) who restore order and/or provide the means necessary for people's survival. Chinese myths include Nu Wa's restoration of order after the rampage of the monster Gong-gong, Bao-Chu's Quest for the Sun, Yi the Archer, Kuan Yin's Gift of Rice, and several flood myths.

Assignment: *Myths have four functions: cosmological, mystical, sociological and psychological. Each myth will be assigned to a small group of students who will present to the class a discussion of how the myth addresses these four functions.

D. Students will conclude the study of ancient myths by reading hero myths from various cultures. The focus will be on heroes as representatives of their cultures' values, the typical life-pattern of the hero and role of the journey/quest motif in hero myths. The Chinese heroes covered include Yi the Archer, the Emperor Yao and Yu.

Assignments: *Working in groups, students will apply the hero life pattern developed by Lord Raglan to heroes covered in their readings.
*Working in groups, students will chart the cultural values exemplified by each hero. They will use the charts to point out values that appear to be common in many cultures as well as those that seem distinctive to particular cultures.
*Each student will choose a contemporary hero from one of the

following cultures--China, Japan, India, Africa, S. America--and write a short paper comparing the cultural values represented by this hero to those values represented by the culture's mythic heroes.

E. At this point in the course, the transition is made to works of literature that reflect the influence of ancient myths--their themes, characters, and motifs. The work chosen to best help the students make this transition is Wu Ch'eng-en's *Monkey* (*Hsi-yu chi*).

- Assignments:
- *Students will read background material on Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.
 - *Students will read a selection of Chinese folktales from the Tang period, noting reoccurring themes and motifs.
 - *Students will answer questions as part of a reading log kept as they read *Monkey*. (see Appendix C)
 - *Each student will write a paper on *Monkey*. (see Appendix D)

IV. EVALUATION

A. Students' understanding of assigned readings will be assessed through the use of **response papers**-- short, informal writing assignments over assigned readings. These papers will be evaluated on completeness (Have all the concerns of the topic been addressed?); quantity (Is the response to the topic fairly well developed?); form (Have assigned guidelines been followed?); and timeliness (Each response paper is due at the beginning of class to ensure that the student is prepared for class discussion.)

B. Students will be given four **tests** during the course. Tests will generally consist of three parts: an open-book essay portion to be completed outside of class; an in-class objective section; and an in-class analysis of a new myth or story/poem.

Essay Section: One week before the in-class test, students will be given several essay questions from which they will chose two to answer. They may use texts, notes, and handouts to complete this portion of the test. The essay portion of the test will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- *Each essay must clearly address the question.
- *The support must draw from a variety of myths from a variety of cultures: Occidental Myths, Oriental Myths, and Primitive Myths. Since this portion of the test is open-book, answers must be specific and thorough.
- *The essays should demonstrate the students' ability to analyze and to make connections, not to simply retell myths.
- *Answers should be in a clear essay form. Lists and fragmented answers will not

be accepted. Students are expected to follow the conventions of written English-- i.e. use proper grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics.

Objective Portion: This portion of the test is over background information from in-class lectures, handouts, and readings. While students are not be expected to remember the names of all the characters in the myths, they may need to recall plots of the myths and to demonstrate understanding of variations among cultures.

In-class Analysis of a New Myth: One week before the test, students will be given a new myth which has not been discussed in class. They will have time to read and to annotate the myth before bringing it to class for the test. After completing the Objective portion of the test, students will be given questions to answer over this myth. They may consult text and notes during this in-class portion of the test.

C. The short **paper** over *Monkey* will be used to assess the students' ability to critically analyze and discuss archetypal themes in a literary work.

D. **Group presentations** will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of archetypal themes and characters through a variety of mediums: visual, oral and written. Assessment of group work will be based on a combination of evaluations by the instructor, the whole class, the group's members and the individual student.

V. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following are some general discussion questions. They are applicable to most cultures' myths, including China's.

Creation Myths

What are some of the motifs in this creation myth that are similar to those in other creation myths you have read?

What features does this creator have in common with other creator deities? Are any of the secondary characters in this myth similar to those in other creation myths?

Various cultures offer different reasons why their god(s) created human beings. What do these reasons reveal about the nature of the god(s)?

It's been said that the celestial order of the planets became a model for humankind in the building of an earthly order. How do myths reveal this link to the orderly movement of the planets?

Fertility Myths

One of the functions of myths is sociological—to validate and maintain social order. How do myths reveal a code of human behavior?

How do myths reveal the cyclical nature of life: birth, maturity, death, and rebirth?

How do the fertility myths reveal the importance of compromise?

Hero Myths

While heroes are typically brave and able to accomplish great feats, they often exhibit other traits which are important to their respective cultures. What are some of these other "heroic" virtues exhibited by the heroes we've studied? What do these virtues reveal about the heroes' cultures?

The Eternal Feminine has two aspects: a) the nurturing and life-giving aspect (wife/mother) and b) the devouring and destroying aspect (temptress). How are these two aspects revealed in the women who appear in the hero myths we've studied? What seem to be the primary functions of women in these hero myths?

VI. ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES FOR PRESENTING MATERIAL

Course activities are designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles.

A. **Reading** assignments will be varied. Students will read many of the ancient myths. While their primary text provides prose translations of myths, students will also be given excerpts of some myths in verse translations. When appropriate, students may compare several translations of the same passage from a myth. Students will also read analyses of myths by such authorities as Joseph Campbell, Otto Rank, and Robert Graves. A major reading assignment will be Wu Ch'eng-en's *Monkey*. (Because of the extensive material covered in this course, students will necessarily read a condensed version of this lengthy work.) Finally, as students apply their understanding of myth to contemporary literature, they will read a variety of poems and short stories.

B. **Lectures:** Some background material will be presented in a traditional lecture format. For example, I will give an introductory lecture on Chinese culture as a preface to the class discussion of *Monkey*. I will also provide background information on Wu Ch'eng-en and Tang literature. When possible, lectures will be supplemented with slides or other

visual aids.

C. **Class discussions** will, of course, be emphasized. Assigned readings along with response writings should encourage students to come to class prepared for discussions. The instructor will facilitate some of these discussion while others will be student-initiated. Working alone or in groups, students will prepare questions for group discussion.

D. **Writing** activities will be extensive and varied. Informal writing will include regular Response Writing assignments and in-class "brainstorming" over topics just prior to discussion. Formal writing is required for essay questions on the tests and for the short paper on *Monkey*.

E. **Collaborative activities** in class will include preparing comparative charts for analysis of common elements in myths and preparing discussion questions. Some collaborative testing may also be used. Students will also be encouraged to form study and discussion groups that meet outside of class.

F. A **group presentation** of an archetypal theme or character is a major project due at the end of the course. This presentation must have a strong visual component as well as a full-class activity.

VII. AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Joseph Campbell's *Power of Myth* video series with Bill Moyers includes some excellent background material on Asian mythology and insights into the fundamental differences between Eastern and Western myths.

According to recent Internet sources a *Journey to the West* TV series has been performed twice last year on WNYCTV 31.

There are currently two Internet sources for material on *Monkey*:

<http://bronze.ucs.indiana.edu/~hyuan/monkey.html>

<http://groupweb.com/chinagc/monkey.htm>

VIII. CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS

Since a primary focus of this course is the comparative study of myths, a strong Asian

unit is essential. Many students come to this course with a background in Greek and/or Norse mythology, but few know any Asian myths.

IX. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Birrell, Anne. *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

This is a comprehensive, well-organized collection of Chinese myths interspersed with commentary about Chinese culture and parallels to other mythologies. This is a worthwhile reference book for both students and instructors.

Bodde, Derek. "Myths of Ancient China." *Mythologies of the Ancient World*. Samuel Noah Kramer, ed. New York: Doubleday, 1961: 367-408.

Preceding his discussion of some of the more well known Chinese myths, Bodde discusses some of the unique problems facing scholars of Chinese mythology. Whereas in many cultures historical figures have been mythologized, in China mythological characters have been transformed into historical figures. The chapter discusses this and other unique features of Chinese myth as well as its more universal qualities that link it to other cultures' mythologies discussed in the rest of this book.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

This classic work by the leading authority on mythology gives insights into the Asian hero within the context of the hero archetype. Campbell illustrates the hero as culture-bringer in his discussion of the Perfect Earthly Emperors of Chinese antiquity. The book also includes discussions of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. This is a must-read for anyone proposing to teach hero myths and one of Campbell's more accessible books for beginning students.

Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live By*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

The emphasis in this book is the function of myths, their relevance to human lives. Several chapters focus specifically on Asian myths: "The Separation of East and West," "The Confrontation of East and West in Religion," "The Inspiration of Oriental Art," and "Zen."

Campbell, Joseph. *Oriental Mythology*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. Vol. 2 of *The Masks of God*. 4 vols.

This is an essential reference book for any student of Eastern mythology. Campbell explores the prehistoric roots of the Eastern myths and their separate evolution from the mythologies of the West. The chapter "Chinese Mythology" is very comprehensive. Beginning mythology students may find this reading quite formidable.

Carus, Paul. ed. *The Gospel of Buddha*. Rockport, MA: Oneworld Publications, 1994.

This is a very readable book recounting events of Buddha's life and offering insights into his doctrines. A special table at the end of the book indicates parallels between Buddha's teachings and the Christian Gospels. This would be a good book for students to use as part of their background reading for *Monkey* or as a general overview of Buddhist mythology.

Chen Jingpan. *Confucius as a Teacher: Philosophy of Confucius with Special Reference to Its Educational Implications*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Delta Publishing Sdn Bhd, 1993.

Part of the background reading in Chinese culture must include a book on Confucius. This book is well-organized with a balance of text and commentary. Teachers may find the education slant particularly insightful.

Cotterell, Arthur. *A Dictionary of World Mythology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

This is a general reference book. The chapter on East Asia contains some general background information on the cultures, followed by a concise dictionary of prominent figures of the region's mythologies.

Dawson, Raymond. *The Chinese Experience*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978.

An instructor may find the section on "The Aesthetic Experience" a helpful resource for background material on the literary conventions in both the mythology and early novels of China.

Eliot, Alexander. *The Universal Myths: Heroes, Gods, Tricksters and others*. New York: Truman Talley Books, 1990.

Although the myths in this collection are very condensed, its strength lies in the variety of myths and in their thematic organization. This is a very accessible book for beginning myth students as it makes clear how certain themes and motifs cross cultures. The collection includes a number of Chinese myths, including the stories of Shen I, the Cosmic Archer, Li Hollow-Eyes, and the compassionate Miao.

Ions, Veronica. *The World's Mythology*. Edison, NJ: Chartwell, 1987.

This is a beautifully illustrated books that gives some general background information on major mythologies. Students of Asian myth could get some cultural insights as well from the chapters on China, Japan, and India.

Kao, Karl S.Y. ed. *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

The introduction to this collection contains an informative discussion of the conventions and motifs of Chinese folktales. The collection also contains a number of tales from the Tang Dynasty, which were to influence Wu Ch'eng-en as he wrote *Monkey*.

Lai, Whalen. "From Protean Ape to Handsome Saint: The Monkey King." *Asian Folklore Studies*. Vol. 53. 1994: 29-65.

This essay traces Monkey's background to other characters from Chinese legend and folklore. It would be a helpful resource for instructors, but may be difficult reading for beginning mythology students.

The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. Ed. Felix Guirand. Trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994.

This well-illustrated volume is a helpful reference for both students and teachers of world mythology. The section on Chinese mythology gives cultural background and insightful

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overviews of prominent mythic characters.

Mackenzie, Donald A. *Myths of China and Japan*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1994.

The collection offers a variety of myths with a strong emphasis on symbolism and cultural context. With its chapters on dragon myths and Taoist myths, this collection is good background reading for *Monkey*.

McGreal, Ian P. ed. *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

This is a very helpful background reference book for students and teachers of Asian mythology. Of particular interest to students of Chinese mythology are the sections on Confucius, Lao Tzu and Buddha. Each section begins with a brief overview of the person's major works and ideas. A concise presentation of biography and philosophy follows, including a list of additional readings. Of particular interest to readers of *Monkey* is the section on Hsuan-tsang, the Buddhist monk whose pilgrimage to India and subsequent travelogue were the basis of Wu Ch'eng-en's novel.

Page, Michael. *The Power of Ch'i: An Introduction to Chinese Mysticism and Philosophy*. San Francisco: Thorsons, 1994.

This book provides some insightful background reading for *Monkey*. The elixirs, shape-shifting, cloud-soaring, and quest for immortality found in the novel have their roots in Taoist mysticism. This book makes very accessible, insights into Chinese philosophy, mysticism and culture.

Robert, Moss. ed. and trans. *Chinese Fairy Tales & Fantasies*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.

Students may enjoy this collection of short tales by Chinese Confucian and Taoist philosophers. Among them are some of the stories from the Tang Dynasty that both captivated and influenced Wu Ch'eng-en. Students will recognize many of the same themes characters and motifs in these tales as they read selections from *Monkey*.

Rosenberg, Donna. *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics*.

Lincolnwood,
IL:

Although the prose translations of the myths are not the most comprehensive, this text offers complete myths from a wide variety of cultures. Myths are arranged by culture with some background information at the beginning of each chapter. Asian myths include creation myths of India, China and Japan; "Yi the Archer"; " Bao Chu's Quest for the Sun"; "Amaterasu"; and the "Kotan Utunnai" (Ainu).

Schirokauer, Conrad. *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations*. New York: Harcourt, 1978.

A book such as this would be helpful for an instructor preparing background material for *Monkey*. The chapter on the T'ang Dynasty gives some background on the literature that inspired Wu Ch'eng-en. There is also an extensive chapter on the Ming Dynasty, which spanned Wu Ch'eng-en's lifetime. Included in this chapter are concise discussions of the literacy and the novel of this period.

Sproul, Barbara. *Primal Myths: Creating the World*. New York: Harper, 1979.

This is a comprehensive collection of creation myths, which would be a very useful resource for students and teachers of comparative mythology. In addition to the familiar Chinese creation myth of Pangu, the collection includes a Taoist and Confucian explanation of creation.

Tom, K.S. *Echoes from Old China: Life Legends and Lore of the Middle Kingdom*.

Honolu
lu:
Univer
sity of
Hawaii

Press,
1990.

This book offers an overview of many features of Chinese culture of particular interest to those studying Chinese mythology. Chapters include "Popular Gods and Religious Personages" and "Chinese Hells." The book also provides some helpful background information for *Monkey*, such as the lives of Lao Tzu, Confucius and Mencius. The chapter on the Chinese system of civil service examinations might also interest readers of *Monkey* since Tripitaka's father, Ch'en O, participates in these exams.

Werner, E.T.C. *Myths and Legends of China*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1994.

This is a comprehensive collection of the major Chinese myths and some legends. The chapter "How Monkey Became a God" includes a number of condensed chapters from Wu Ch'eng-en's classic.

Whittaker, Clio. ed. *An Introduction to Oriental Mythology*. Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1989.

This is a beautiful illustrated book containing condensed versions of popular myths from China, India and Japan. Some background information is also given at the beginning of each section.

Wing-Tsit Chan, et al. *The Great Asian Religions*. New York: MacMillan, 1969.

This text offers a well-organized, comprehensive overview of Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Islam. Students, especially, may find this a good resource book because of its clear organization and concise explanations.

Wright, Arthur F. *Buddhism in Chinese History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

As part of the background reading for *Monkey*, this book offers insights into the distinctive features of Chinese Buddhism as it was mingled with Confucianism and Taoism.

Wu Ch'eng-en. *Monkey*. Trans. and Ed. Arthur Waley. New York: Grove Press, 1984.

Waley has translated only thirty of the one hundred chapters of the original novel. Those chapters he has included, Waley has translated in their entirety. Like Kherdian, Waley has left out most of the chapters dealing with the actual pilgrimage to India, so the transformation of Monkey from rogue to saint may seem abrupt to some students. Waley's chapters, being more fully translated, are richer in detail than Kherdian's.

Wu Ch'eng-en. *Monkey: A Journey to the West*. Trans. and Ed. David Kherdian. Boston: Shambhala, 1992.

Kherdian's retelling of Wu Ch'eng-en's novel is a very readable, condensed version that fits easily into an undergraduate comparative mythology course that already has extensive reading. Kherdian's *Monkey* is strong in its depiction of Monkey's early character. The humor of the story is as apparent as the religious allegory behind Monkey's adventures. Because so many of the pilgrims' adventures have been omitted, however, students may find Monkey's transformation a bit abrupt. Chapters are not always presented in their entirety, so character development of Pigsy and Tripitaka is also sketchy.

Wu Ch'eng-en. *The Journey to the West*. Ed. and Trans. Anthony C. Yu. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

If an instructor decides to forego this complete translation of Wu Ch'eng-en's novel in favor of one of the condensed versions, s/he would be wise to consult this edition's lengthy introduction by Anthony C. Yu, which gives extensive, cultural, historical and literary background information.

Yuan Ke. *Dragons and Dynasties: An Introduction to Chinese Mythology*. Trans. Kim Echlin and Nie Zhixiong. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

This is a concise collection of a variety of myths and some well-known folktales. The chapter "Divine Heroes" is particularly useful, offering a variety of myths about each hero.

APPENDIX A

PRE-TEST

Before we begin our reading and discussion of *Monkey: A Journey to the West*, take a few moments to self-assess how much you already know about this novel, relevant characters from Chinese history and mythology, and relevant archetypes. After each name or term, tell briefly what you know--or think you know--about it.

Buddha

Lao-Tzu

Confucius

Kuan-yin

a Bodhisattva

Jade Emperor

Queen Mother of the West

Peach Feast

Monkey King

Trickster

tutelary figures

On the back of this sheet write what you recall about the Chinese myths we have studied. Who are some of the memorable characters? What are some of the cultural values the myths imparted? What were some of the traits of the heroes?

APPENDIX B

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF

CREATION MYTHS

	Babylonia	Egyptian	Greek	Norse	Indian	Chinese
Creation						
Principal Creator						
Material of Creation						
Method of Creation						
Human Beings Created How?						
Human Beings Created Why?						
Ultimate Fate						
Dualitiess						
Motifs						

APPENDIX C

READING LOG QUESTIONS
Monkey: A Journey to the West
 Edited and Translated by David Kherdian

After reading each chapter in Monkey: A Journey to the West, answer the guided reading questions. Your answers should be clear and concise (i.e. brief and to the point), yet written in complete sentences. I will not give credit for lists, fragments or single word answers. While typed work is always appreciated, you may handwrite this assignment using blue or black ink on smooth-edged lined paper. Whether you type or handwrite the assignment, clearly label each question: chapter and number.

Logs are due at the beginning of class on _____.

Chpt. 1 "Stone Monkey King"

1. How is Monkey's origin reflected in his nature--i.e. how he thinks and behaves?
2. What is Monkey's first self-imposed title? What does this title reveal about his character at this point?
3. What does vacuity mean? What does Monkey's religious name reveal about his character?

Chpt. 2 "The Search for Immortality"

1. What does Monkey learn during his years of study? How is he changed by this knowledge?
2. Why is Monkey sent home, and what is his parting promise to the Patriarch?

Chpt. 3 "Demon King of Havoc"

1. After defeating the Demon King, Monkey is asked by his subjects how he acquired his powers. What is his reply? What does this reply reveal about Monkey?
2. (Leave a space for this answer and come back to the question after you have read a bit more.) Why is it ironic that Monkey first uses his new powers to subdue a demon named Havoc?

Chpt. 4 "Monkey's Iron Cudgel"

1. After Monkey has learned the arts of magic, what skill does he set out to acquire?
2. Is Monkey's rudeness to the Dragon King justified? Why or why not.
3. What is a cudgel? Why does this seem like an appropriate weapon for Monkey?

Chpt 5 "A Messenger from Heaven"

1. What is your impression of the Chinese concept of heaven?
2. What angers Monkey the most about his job?

Chpt. 6 "In the Cloud Palace of the Jade Emperor"

1. What does Monkey's new self-imposed title reveal about his character? How is Monkey changing or evolving?
2. What is most humiliating to the heavenly warriors as they are defeated by Monkey?

Chpt. 7 "Immortality Peaches and Golden Elixirs"

1. Why does the Jade Emperor grant Monkey the title "The Great Sage, Equal of Heaven"?
2. What does this chapter suggest about titles, status, and political power in general?

Chpt. 8 "Monkey Goes Too Far"

1. What is Monkey's response when the attacking Planets shout a litany of his transgressions? What does this response say about Monkey? Do you admire him or find him as obnoxious as the heavenly court?
2. How does Erh-lang seem different from Monkey's other opponents?

Chpt. 9 "In the Buddha's Palm"

1. How does Erh-Lang respond to the homage paid to him after his victory over Monkey?
2. How is Monkey changed by his capture and attempted execution by Lao-tzu? Why is it appropriate that he acquires the nickname Fiery Eyes?
3. How does the Buddha defeat Monkey? How does this confrontation differ from all the others Monkey has faced?

Chpt. 10 "Kuan-yin's Search for a Pilgrim"

1. What drove the Curtain-Raising Marshal from heaven? What was his response to his punishment?
2. What drove the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds in the Heavenly River from heaven? What was his response to his punishment?
3. What did Aojin, the Dragon King do to deserve his punishment?
4. What traits do all of these future disciples share?

Chpt. 11 "The Journey to the West"

1. Why is Hsuan-tsang called Triptaka?
2. What do you think the Pilgrim and his disciples must all receive new names before they begin their journey?

Chpt. 12 "Triptaka Takes a Disciple"

1. Why does Monkey slay the Tiger even though it gives up and does not attack him?
2. Why does Triptaka chastise Monkey?

Chpt. 13 "The Cap of Discipline"

1. Why does Monkey decide to return to Triptaka?
2. Do you think the magic cap was necessary to keep Monkey in line?

Chpt. 14 "Riding the Dragon"

1. What would have prevented Monkey's battle with the dragon?
2. Why do you think Monkey is ready to give up the quest after one relatively simple battle?

Chpt. 15 "Piggy and the Dragon of the River of Flowing Sands"

1. How is Monkey convinced of Piggy's sincerity?
2. How does the proverb "What's easily gotten is soon forgotten" apply to all the members of this quest?

Chpt. 16 "Flaming Mountain and the Iron Fan"

1. What inner conflict must each of the travelers face?
2. What must people do to earn the benefits of the immortals who control the magic fan?

Chpt. 17 "Fanning the Fire"

1. How do Monkey's attempts to acquire the fan from Rakshasi differ from his encounters with other adversaries? How does Monkey seem to be changing?
2. Why is it significant (appropriate?) that Monkey is deceived by Rakshasi?

Chpt. 18 "The Bull Demon's Wife"

1. What do the characters of Rakshasi, the Bull Demon King, and Princess Jade Countenance reveal about the character of the immortals? What does this say about Monkey's original "spiritual" quest to obtain the secret of immortality?

Chpt. 19 "Bull Demon Wins the Day"

1. Why is Monkey so easily deceived by the Bull Demon?
2. Why does the Bull Demon ignore a plea from heaven to lend the fan to Monkey?

Chpt. 20 "Putting Out the Fire"

1. What is ironic about Monkey's battle with the Bull Demon?
2. How do Monkey's dealings with Rakshasi reveal the changes that have taken place in him?

Chpt. 21 "The Path Behind the Temples and the Bottomless Boat"

1. How do the images of fire and water from the previous chapter relate to the changes in the natures of the monk and his disciples?
2. Why is it significant that only Monkey will cross the log bridge and only he immediately recognizes the Conductor Buddha?
3. What does willingness to ride in the bottomless boat signify?

Chpt. 22 "The Last Calamity"

1. Why must there be a last calamity?
2. Why is it appropriate that the White Turtle bring on the last calamity?

Chpt. 23 "The Western Paradise"

1. Why is it appropriate that only two of the travellers should become Buddhas at the end of their journey?

APPENDIX D

SHORT PAPER: MONKEY: A JOURNEY TO THE WEST

You will write a two to three page (500-750 words) double-spaced typed paper which demonstrates your ability to critically analyze and discuss archetypal themes in Monkey: A Journey to the West. The following are some suggested topics for this paper:

How are the gods depicted in this story? What is their relationship to Monkey and the human characters?

How does the life of Monkey follow the typical hero's life pattern? How is it different? Are these differences significant?

What obstacles (anything from monsters to character flaws to physical obstructions) must Monkey overcome? What do these obstacles represent in terms of our own lives' journeys?

Taoist commentator Liu I-ming says that Monkey "explains both social realities and ultimate realities." What are these "realities"?

Trace the influence of one or more of the following philosophies in Monkey: Confuciansim, Doaism (Taoism) and/or Buddhism.

How does Monkey evolve from a trickster figure (see definition on page 463 of your Myths & Motifs text) to a truly heroic figure?

How is the story of Monkey an allegory of the journey towards spiritual enlightenment?

Who are the tutelary figures in Monkey? How do they contribute to the success of his journey?

How does Monkey reflect the dualities within our own human nature?

Some problems to avoid in your analysis include too much summary and too few connections made between the textual support and the writer's ideas.

You can avoid oversummarizing, first of all, by remembering that the instructor has read the story. Include sufficient quotes (short) and references to the story to support your ideas, but avoid lengthy passages which simply retell the story.

Due Date: _____

<http://bronze.ucs.indiana.edu/~hyuan/monkey.html>
<http://groupweb.com/chinagc/monkey.htm>